

A RADIO CARD HAVING INDEPENDENT
ANTENNA INTERFACE SUPPORTING
ANTENNA DIVERSITY

CROSS REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of U.S. Application Ser. No. 08/960,194, filed October 29, 1997, ^{NOW ABN} which is a continuation of U.S. Application Ser. No. 08/431,077, filed April 27, 1995, ^{NOW ABN} which is a continuation-in-part of U.S. Application Ser. No. 08/401,526, filed March 10, 1995, ^{NOW ABN} which is in turn a continuation-in-part of U.S. Application Ser. No. 08/258,285, filed June 10, 1994, ^{NOW US PAT NO. 5,708,833} which is in turn a continuation-in-part of U.S. Application Ser. No. 08/226,256, filed April 11, 1994, ^{NOW ABN} which is in turn a continuation-in-part of U.S. Application Ser. No. 08/194,178, filed February 9, 1994, ^{NOW ABN} which is in turn a continuation-in-part of U.S. Application Ser. No. 08/154,020, filed November 17, 1993, ^{NOW ABN} which is in turn a continuation-in-part of U.S. Application Ser. No. 08/107,470, filed August 17, 1993, ^{NOW ABN} which is in turn a continuation-in-part of U.S. Application Ser. No. 08/841,411, filed June 22, 1993, ⁷ which is in turn a continuation-in-part of U.S. Application Ser. No. 08/053,901, filed April 27, 1993, ^{NOW ABN} and U.S. Application Ser. No. 08/097,462, filed July 26, 1993, ^{NOW US PAT NO. 5,590,346}.

AUTHORIZATION PURSUANT TO 37 C.F.R. 1.71(d)(e)

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4 Related Case

5 The present case is related to U.S. Application Ser. No. 08/114,872 filed August 31, 1993
6 by S. Koenck (Attorney Docket No. 36767XXAB), now U.S. Patent No. _____, which is
7 hereby incorporated by reference.

8 Technical Field

9 The present invention relates generally to computer devices utilizing removable radio
10 frequency communication devices used for transmitting and receiving information and more
11 particularly to an improved apparatus for connecting an appropriate antenna to the radio
12 frequency communication device using an antenna cap, and to an improved method and
13 apparatus for connecting a communication card device such as a radio or modem to an
14 appropriate antenna or telephone line.

15 Background Art

16 Many computer devices use modular components to allow increased flexibility and
17 adaptability to various work environments. This is especially true in the area of small computing
18 devices such as hand held computer terminals, vehicle mounted computer terminals and small
19 lap-top computers. Along these lines, small, removable and interchangeable memory cards were
20 developed. The memory cards have now become commonplace and the PCMCIA memory card
21 standard has become accepted industry wide as the format to use.

22 The PCMCIA memory cards are relatively small having a length and width roughly the
23 size of a credit card. The thickness of these cards is more than that of a credit card and there are
24 several thicknesses used for different cards. These cards are designed to slide into a receiving
25 portion of some computer device. At one end of the card is an interface section which is in
26 essence the female portion of a connector that mates with the male end in the receiving device.
27 All of this, including the number of pins, the layout of the pins, and the pin size for the

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connection, are all part of the PCMCIA standard.

The success of the removable and interchangeable PCMCIA memory cards has led to the development of other types of peripheral devices that use the same standard. Of particular interest to the present application are the cards that contain radio transceivers and modems. These devices can be inserted into and connected to a receiving device in the same manner as a memory card. However, with these devices there is an additional connection which must be made to connect a radio antenna, a telephone line, a cellular phone, or an antenna for the cellular phone.

Radio frequency communication allows two or more computer terminals to communicate without actually being wired together. Many types of radio communication exist and many different radio frequencies and frequency ranges can and must be used to accommodate the different types of radio communication. For example, a radio that operates by sending the information on a single channel in the UHF band differs greatly from a radio that sends its information utilizing spread spectrum frequency hopping in the 2400-2483 MHz range. The antennas necessary to operate in the different frequency ranges also differ. Similarly, modem communication, whether connected by traditional phone lines or by cellular phones, allow computer devices that are not hardwired together to exchange information.

Connection of the radio card or modem card to an outside antenna or telephone line is typically made by either extending the length of the card beyond the standard card length with the antenna or connection built into the extended portion or by having an antenna or telephone cable protrude out of the end of the radio card to which the user may attach an antenna or telephone line. These options have significant limitation. Both connections severely limit the type of device that can accommodate the cards. Most devices cannot accommodate the extra length without some modification and both connections make environmentally sealing the connections difficult. Additionally, both connections are susceptible to increased damage from dropping or other physical trauma. An external antenna to which the user must couple an antenna is inconvenient and subjects the radio periods of unreliability due to wear of the cable

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1 and connection.

2 An additional problem is converting computer devices that were not designed to utilize
3 radio or modem cards, and thus have no built in or attached antenna, into devices that can utilize
4 radio and modem cards while still avoiding the various antenna connection problems discussed
5 above.

6 Thus, there is a need in a computer terminal for an improved apparatus for connecting a
7 removable card type radio or modem to an antenna or telephone line attached to or built within
8 the computer terminal. Additionally, there is a need for an improved computer device apparatus
9 for connecting a removable card type radio to a protected, interchangeable, environmentally
10 sealed antenna.

11 Disclosure of the Invention

12 The present invention relates generally to computer devices utilizing removable radio
13 frequency communication devices used for transmitting and receiving information and more
14 particularly to an improved apparatus for connecting an appropriate antenna to the radio
15 frequency communication device using an antenna cap, and to an improved method and
16 apparatus for connecting a communication card device such as a radio or modem to an
17 appropriate antenna or telephone line, and connecting a communication card device such as a
18 radio or modem to a power source.

19 In one embodiment, a removable radio card can be inserted into a receiving device which
20 is part of a computer terminal. The radio card has an electrical interface which engages with an
21 interface on the receiving device. The interface on the receiving device is connected to the
22 computer terminal and when the interfaces are engaged, communication between the radio card
23 and the computer terminal is possible. Additionally, the receiving device is connected to at least
24 one antenna by means of an antenna cable which has a pair of contacts located on the receiving
25 device. This pair of receiving device antenna contacts encounter a pair of antenna contacts on
26 the radio card. This connection allows the radio card to utilize an antenna located on or within
27 the receiving device. Additionally, the connection of a modem card to a telephone, cellular

1 phone, or antenna for a cellular phone can be accomplished in substantially the same manner.

2 In another embodiment of the present invention a radio card or modem card which is
3 inserted into the computer terminal contains one set of contacts which encounter a corresponding
4 set of contacts located on the receiving device. The receiving device contacts are connected to a
5 switching matrix which is in turn connected to at least one of radio frequency antennas, a cellular
6 phone, an antenna for cellular phone, or a jack for connection to a standard telephone line. As
7 part of the regular communication with the radio card or modem card the computer terminal
8 interrogates the radio card or modem card and determines to which antenna or telephone line the
9 card should be connected.

10 In still another embodiment of the present invention the radio card antenna contacts are at
11 the opposite end of the radio card with respect to the electrical interface. In this embodiment, the
12 computer device includes a cap which engages with the opening in the housing through which
13 the radio card was inserted. The cap includes antenna contacts positioned to engage the radio
14 card antenna contacts. The cap is connected to one end of a band. The other end of the band is
15 connected to the housing of the computer device. An antenna can be embedded in the cap,
16 embedded in the band or embedded in or on the housing of the computer device. Connection of
17 the antenna contacts on the cap and of the antenna is accomplished through the cap and utilizes
18 either wire connections or a micro shield ribbon.

19 Different radio cards may transmit on different frequencies and therefore need different
20 antennas. Multiple antennas allow the radio cards to selectively transmit and receive on different
21 antennas based upon the frequency used for communication. Additionally, two similar antennas
22 disposed in different positions can be used to implement an antenna diversity scheme.

23 Similar to the antenna contacts, power contacts are also positioned on the housing of the
24 radio or modem card to provide needed supplemental power which cannot be provided for by the
25 electrical interface.

26 In yet another embodiment of the present invention, transmission line characteristics are
27 used to control the power flow from the radio transceiver to the internal and external antennas.

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1 Three transmission lines make up the transmission line system with one end of each transmission
2 line meeting at a common point. The radio transceiver is connected to the opposite end of one of
3 the transmission lines. An internal antenna is attached to the opposite end of a second of the
4 transmission lines. The third transmission line is used to attach an optional external antenna.
5 With the external antenna optional, the opposite or load end of the third transmission line can
6 either be open, with no external antenna connected, or loaded to a specific rated antenna, such as
7 50 ohms, when an external antenna is connected.

8 Each transmission line has two characteristics: the line impedance and the line length. By
9 carefully selecting the line impedance and line length characteristics for each of the three
10 transmission lines, a desirable VSWR (voltage standing-wave ratio) looking into the radio
11 transceiver end of the first transmission line can be achieved. Also by carefully selecting the line
12 impedance and line length characteristics for each of the three transmission lines a desirable
13 power ratio between the second and third transmission line can be achieved in both the case
14 when an external antenna is attached and in the case where the external antenna is not attached.
15 Thus, an antenna selection or switching system is accomplished without the need for a physical
16 or electronic switch.

17 An object of the present invention is to provide an improved antenna connector for use
18 with radio cards which can be inserted into various computer devices.

19 Another object of the present invention is to provide an improved antenna connector
20 which is reliable, economical and easy to use.

21 A further object of the present invention is to provide an improved antenna connector
22 whereby an appropriate antenna will be connected to a radio card by selectively positioning the
23 antenna contacts on the radio card.

24 Another object of the present invention is to provide an improved antenna connector
25 whereby a radio card may simultaneously connect to and utilize more than one radio antenna.

26 Still another object of the present invention is to provide an improved apparatus for
27 connecting a modem card to a telephone line, cellular telephone or antenna for a cellular phone.

1 A further object of the present invention is to provide an improved apparatus which
2 utilizes only one set of contacts on the radio card or modem card and uses a switching matrix to
3 connect the radio card or modem card to the appropriate antenna or telephone line.

4 Another object of the present invention is to provide an antenna cap for use with
5 computer devices utilizing radio cards.

6 Another object of the present invention is to provide an antenna cap which is reliable,
7 economical and easy to use.

8 A further object of the present invention is to provide an antenna cap whereby an
9 appropriate antenna will be connected to a radio card by selectively positioning the antenna
10 contacts on the radio card.

11 Another object of the present invention is to provide an antenna cap whereby a radio card
12 may simultaneously connect to and utilize more than one radio antenna.

13 Still another object of the present invention is to provide an antenna cap which provides
14 an antenna for computer devices which do not have a built in antenna.

15 Still another object of the present invention is to provide an improved apparatus for
16 supplying power for radio and modem cards which utilize power contacts positioned on the side
17 of the radio and modem cards.

18 A further object of the present invention is to for an antenna selection or switching
19 system which utilizes the transmission lines impedances and lengths to divert a significant
20 portion of the available power to the appropriate antenna.

21 Other objects, advantages, and novel features of the present invention will become
22 apparent from the following detailed description of the invention when considered in conjunction
23 with the accompanying drawings.

24 Brief Description of the Drawings

25 Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a radio card and a corresponding port for receiving the
26 radio card built in accordance with the present invention;

27 Fig. 2 is a partial top plan view of a radio card and port for receiving the radio card with
28

1 Fig. 17 is a partial side elevational view of another computer device built in accordance
2 with the present invention;

3 Fig. 18 is a top view taken along line 18-18 of Fig. 17 of the computer device showing
4 the rubber cap inserted therein;

5 Fig. 19 is a partial vertical sectional view taken along line 19-19 of Fig. 18 showing a
6 radio antenna embedded within the rubber cap;

7 Fig. 20 is a partial vertical section view taken along line 20-20 of Fig. 19 of the rubber
8 cap;

9 Fig. 21 is a partial vertical sectional view of another embodiment of the present
10 invention;

11 Fig. 22 is a partial vertical sectional view of still another embodiment of the present
12 invention;

13 Fig. 23 is a partial back view taken along line 23-23 of Fig. 15 of the computer device;

14 Fig. 24 is a partial back view of still another embodiment built in accordance with the
15 present invention;

16 Fig. 25 is a partial horizontal sectional view taken along line 25-25 of Fig. 24 of the band
17 showing the shielded ribbon used to carry the antenna signals;

18 Fig. 26 is partial back view of a computer device of yet another embodiment of the
19 present invention;

20 Fig. 27 is a partial top view of a computer device built in accordance with the present
21 invention showing a pair of power contacts;

22 Fig. 28 is a partial top view of another computer device built in accordance with the
23 present invention showing redundant power contacts;

24 Fig. 29 is a circuit diagram of a switching matrix for microprocessor control of antenna
25 selection;

26 Fig. 30 is a circuit diagram showing an antenna diversity scheme which can be
27 incorporated into the switching matrix circuit of Fig. 29;

1 Fig. 31 is a schematic view of a transmission line antenna power switching system built
2 in accordance with the present invention; and

3 Fig. 32 is a schematic view of the transmission line system of Fig. 31 showing an
4 attached external antenna.

5 Best Modes for Carrying Out the Invention

6 Referring now to the drawings wherein like reference numerals designate identical or
7 corresponding parts throughout the several views, Fig. 1 shows a radio card (10) and a receiving
8 device (11) built in accordance with the present invention. The radio card (10) has a housing
9 (13) inside which is a completely operation radio transceiver (not shown). The receiving device
10 (11) in this embodiment of the present invention uses a pair of opposed slots (14) to receive and
11 guide the incoming radio card (10).

12 The radio card (10) has a pair of antenna contacts (15) positioned along the edge of the
13 housing (13). The receiving device (11) has a corresponding pair of antenna contacts (16). As
14 can be seen in Fig. 2, when the radio card (10) is fully inserted into the receiving device (11) the
15 antenna contacts (15) on the radio card housing (13) electrically encounter the corresponding set
16 of antenna contacts (16) positioned on the receiving device (11). The antenna contacts (16) on
17 the receiving device (11) are connected to an antenna cable (18). The antenna cable (18) is in
18 turn connected to an antenna (not shown). Thus, when the radio card (10) is fully inserted into
19 the receiving device (11) the radio card (10) automatically is connected to an antenna.

20 Referring again to Fig. 1, a radio card (10) may have antenna contacts (20), shown in
21 dashed lines, located at different positions on the housing (13). Similarly, the receiving device
22 (11) may have several additional pairs of antenna contacts (22). The additional pairs of antenna
23 contacts (22) on the receiving device (13) can be used to allow access to several different
24 antennas depending on the type and frequency of radio communication to be utilized by the radio
25 card (10). This access is accomplished through additional antenna cables (23) attached to the
26 additional contacts (22). Thus, if the receiving device (13) is part of a hand held computer
27 terminal which has more than one antenna attached or built in, different pairs of contacts (16 &
28

22) can be used to allow access by the radio card to the different antennas depending upon the frequency and range characteristics of each antenna. While a radio card (10) may only operate at one frequency and thereby only need one antenna and therefore only have one pair of antenna contacts, the receiving device (11) still may have several pairs of antenna contacts (16 & 22) all but one of which do not correspond to any pair of radio card (10) antenna contacts (15).

Referring to Figs. 3 and 4, when the radio card (10) is inserted into the receiving device (11) an interface between the radio card (10) and the receiving device (11) is produced. The receiving device (11) has a plurality of pins (30) which form the male portion of a connector. The radio card (10) has a corresponding plurality of holes (31) which form the female portion of the connector and which engage the pins (30). The pins (30) are connected to the computer terminal (not shown) by a series of electrical connections (33) such as wires or electrical ribbon. The holes (31) in the radio card (10) are electrically connected to the radio. When the pins (30) are engaged in the holes (31), electrical signals can be exchanged between the radio card (10) and the computer terminal. The electrical signals can be in the form of information exchange, power supply or both.

The radio card (10) of Figs. 1-4 might also be a modem card (not shown). In this embodiment, the connections would be the same as previously described with the only difference being that instead of the contacts connecting the modem card to a radio antenna, the modem card would be connected to a traditional telephone line, a cellular phone or an antenna for a cellular phone if the cellular phone was contained within the modem card. Any necessary coupling transformer may be built within the computer terminal.

Referring to Figs. 5 and 6, a computer terminal (40) is shown built in accordance with the present invention. The computer terminal (40) has a slot (42) for receiving a radio card (44). The user of the computer terminal (40) lifts up a flexible cover (46) and inserts the radio card (44) into the slot (42). The radio card (44) engages with the computer terminal (40) in a similar manner as described in Figs. 1-4. The radio card (44) has a pair of antenna contacts (48) which engage with a corresponding pair of contacts inside the computer terminal (40). The pair of

1 antenna contacts inside the computer terminal are connected to a radio antenna (not shown).

2 Referring to Fig. 7, another embodiment of the present invention is shown. The radio
3 card (50) has two pairs of antenna contacts (52 & 53) which will encounter respectively two pair
4 of antenna contacts (55 & not shown) on the receiving device (58). This embodiment
5 accommodates a radio card (50) which can operate at two different frequencies which require
6 two different antennas. Standardization of antenna contact position with antenna type is
7 anticipated and covered by the present invention.

8 Referring to Figs. 8-12, another embodiment of a computer terminal (60) built in
9 accordance with the present invention is shown. The computer terminal (60) has a removable
10 end cap (62). When the end cap (62) is removed, a slot (64) is revealed which is used to receive
11 a radio card (66). The slot (64) in the computer terminal (60) has three pairs of antenna contacts
12 (67, 68 and 69) which are respectively connected to three different radio antennas (71, 72 and
13 73). The radio card (66) in this embodiment only has one pair of antenna contacts (75). Thus,
14 when the radio card (66) is inserted into the slot (64), the antenna contacts (75) will match up to
15 the antenna contacts (67) and the radio will utilize the internal antenna (71). The external
16 antenna (73) and the other internal antenna (72) will not be used by this particular radio card
17 (66).

18 Referring now to Fig. 13, still another embodiment of a computer terminal (80) built in
19 accordance with the present invention is shown. A communication card (85) is inserted into the
20 computer terminal (80). The card (85) can either be a radio card or a modem card. The card (85)
21 has a set or pair of contacts (87) which encounter a set or pair of contacts (88) disposed on the
22 receiving portion of the computer terminal (80). The contacts (88) are electrically connected to a
23 switching matrix (90), thus the radio card or modem card (85) is electrically connected to the
24 switching matrix (90).

25 The switching matrix (90) is connected to a plurality of antennas (92, 93 and 94) and to a
26 telephone jack (95). The switching matrix (90) is used to electrically and selectively connect the
27 radio or modem card (85) to the appropriate antenna or to a telephone line. The switching matrix
28

1 (90) is controlled by the control microprocessor (98) of the computer terminal (80). The control
2 microprocessor (98) interrogates the card (85) to determine what kind of card it is and to
3 determine what antenna or telephone connection it needs. The control microprocessor (98) then
4 signals the switching matrix (90) which connects the card (85) to the appropriate antenna (92, 93
5 or 94) or to the phone jack (95).

6 It should be noted that the design of a switching matrix which is to accommodate both RF
7 and telephone connections must take into account the different voltage requirements for each
8 type of communication. For example, the Sony CXG1002 switch discussed below cannot handle
9 the range of voltages necessary for compliance with telephone standards.

10 Referring now to Fig. 29, a circuit diagram (280) for antenna switching matrix is shown.
11 The circuit (280) allows a radio card to be connected to one of two or more internal or connected
12 antennas of a portable computer device. The circuit shown allows antennas (305 and 306) for
13 one of two frequency bands to be selected. The design can be extended to allow additional bands
14 to be added by appropriate selection of a switching device.

15 The illustrated circuit is based upon a Sony CXG1002 GaAs JFET switch (282).
16 Switching is initiated by the control microprocessor (284) within the computer device. This
17 microprocessor (284) may be a dedicated communications or control microprocessor, or it may
18 be the main processor that runs local applications.

19 Upon initial power up of the computer device, the control microprocessor (284)
20 interrogates the radio card via the bus interface (286) to ascertain its type and frequency band of
21 operation. PCMCIA standards include provisions for device identification. Based upon the
22 result of the interrogation, the microprocessor (284) selects the appropriate logic levels from a
23 logic level table (290) for application to the Control A line (292) and Control B line (294) to the
24 CXG1002 switch (282) in order to select the proper antenna for the radio card. For example, if
25 the computer device is designed to accommodate 900 MHz paging receivers and 2.4 GHz
26 wireless local area network transceivers, antenna A (288) would be a 900 MHz antenna and
27 antenna B (289) would be a 2.4 GHz antenna.

1 An optional diversity sense circuit is also shown. This circuit allows the radio card to
2 provide a diversity select signal through the RF connector. The coil (298) is an RF choke,
3 allowing low frequency signals to pass, but blocking RF signals.

4 Referring now to Fig. 30, a second circuit (300) illustrating how the diversity select
5 circuit is implemented is shown. The B antenna output (301) from the band selector is applied to
6 a second CXG1002 switch (320). Two antennas (305 and 306) appropriate for 2.4 GHz are
7 designed into the computer device. These antennas (305 and 306) provide either spatial or
8 polarization diversity, or a combination of the two.

9 Selection of the antenna used is controlled by the radio card. The diversity sense line
10 (308) is used to control the CXG1002 switch (302). The inverter (310) provides buffering and
11 allow a single signal output from the radio card to be used for antenna selection. Alternatively,
12 the diversity sense could be provided to the control microprocessor which could then in turn
13 control the selection of antennas.

14 Selection diversity could be employed in both the A and B antenna paths if desired with
15 the addition of a CXG1002 switch in the A path. This switch could be controlled by the same
16 circuitry as the B switch, eliminating the need for separate control circuitry for the A path.

17 Referring again to Fig. 13, in another embodiment, the control microprocessor (98) is
18 located within the radio card (85). In this configuration, the control microprocessor (98) selects
19 the appropriate antenna by controlling the switching matrix (90) via the antenna interface (88).
20 Thus, the control microprocessor (98) either has preset knowledge of the switching matrix and
21 antenna availability, or may interrogate the microprocessor within the receiving unit for such
22 detail.

23 In addition, in alternate embodiments, the radio card itself contains an antenna (not
24 shown). In most configurations of this embodiment, if no alternate antenna is found within the
25 receiving device, the radio card uses its own antenna. In such configurations, the radio card uses
26 its own antenna as a backup, preferring to use of the receiving device's antennas if available. In
27 other configurations, the radio card may choose the most effective antenna, which may either be

its own or the receiving device's antenna. Such a choice may either be predetermined or made based on actual use, i.e., based on received signal strength indications (RSSI) or other signal or communication quality assessments. For example, referring to Fig. 12, a local antenna is housed within the radio card (64). Thus, if the radio card (64) cannot detect receiving device antennas, the radio card (64) chooses its own locally contained antenna. Referring to Fig. 13, in another exemplary configuration, the radio card (85) also contains its own internal antenna. The control microprocessor (98) not only chooses from among antennas stored within the receiving device, but also considers the antenna stored in the radio card (85). Note that, in addition to any antennas placed in the receiving device, the radio card might also be configured with a plurality of antennas.

Referring now to Figs. 14, 15 and 16, a computer device (111) for utilizing a radio card (110) built in accordance with the present invention is shown. The computer device (111) has a housing (112). Inside the radio card (110) is a completely operation radio transceiver (not shown). The computer device (111) has an opening (114) in the housing (112) through which the radio card (110) can be inserted into the computer device (112). In the present embodiment of the invention, the receiving means for the computer device is a slot (115).

When the radio card (110) is inserted into the slot (115) in the computer device (111) an interface between the radio card (110) and the computer device (111) is produced. The computer device (111) has a plurality of pins (not shown) which form the plug or male portion of a connector. The radio card (110) has a corresponding plurality of sockets or holes (not shown) which form the receptacle or female portion of the connector and which engage the pins. The pins are connected internally and electrically to the computer device (111) by a series of electrical connections such as wires, printed circuit traces or electrical ribbon. The holes in the radio card (110) are electrically connected to the radio transceiver. When the pins engage the holes, electrical signals can be exchanged between the radio transceiver inside the radio card (110) and the computer device (111). The electrical signals can be in the form of information exchange, power supply or both. The radio card (110) includes antenna contacts (117) to engage

corresponding radio antenna contacts that are connected to an appropriate antenna.

The computer device (111) includes a cap (120) which is designed to matingly engage the opening (115) in the housing (112) of the computer device (111) and thereby cover the slot (115) used to receive the radio card (110). A flexible band (122) attaches the cap (122) to the housing (112) of the computer device (111). One end of the band (122) is connected to the cap (122) while the other end is attached to the housing (112). A handle (124) helps assist the removal of the cap (120) from the housing (112) of the computer device (111).

The cap (120) is constructed of a closed cell foam material with high air content for low dielectric losses. Alternatively, a quality dielectric material may be used to reduce the size of the antenna structure. The cap (120) when made of a foam material helps to protect the radio card from the physical trauma typically associated with computer devices of these types.

Additionally, as will be discussed in further detail below, the cap (120) helps to environmentally seal the opening (114) preventing harmful material from the outside such as dust or moisture from reaching the radio card (110) and helps to reduce the escape of electronic noise from the housing (112) created by the radio card (110) and computer device (111). As will be discussed below, a grounded metal shield covering a portion of the cap (120) is used to reduce the escape of electronic noise.

While the cap (120) helps to seal the opening, protect the radio card (110) and hold the radio card in place, the primary function of the cap is to provide the radio card (110) access to an appropriate antenna or antennas. The connection of the radio card (110) to the antenna is made through the cap (120). The antenna or antennas can be embedded in the cap (120), embedded in the band (122) or even attached to, mounted on, or embedded in the housing (112) of the computer device (111).

Referring now to Figs. 17 and 18, a computer device (130) built in accordance with the present invention is shown with a cap (134) engaged in the opening of the housing (132) wherein a radio card can be inserted. A band (136) is attached to both the cap (134) and the housing (132). The band (136) helps prevent the loss of the cap (134) when the cap (134) is not engaged

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1 in the housing (132) of the computer device (130).

2 Referring now to Figs. 19 and 20, the cap (132) is shown engaged with the housing (132)
3 of the computer device (130). The cap (134) includes an outwardly extending lip (136) which
4 helps to environmentally seal the opening in the housing (132) preventing harmful material from
5 the outside such as dust or moisture from reaching the radio card (140) which has been inserted
6 into the computer device (130). When the cap (134) is completely inserted or fully engaged in
7 the housing (132), the lip (135) sealingly engages the housing (132).

8 Embedded in the cap (134) is an antenna (150). The antenna (150) is connected to the
9 radio card (140) through contacts (151 and 152) disposed on the cap (134) and contacts (141 and
10 142) disposed on the radio card (140). Contact (152) is the ground contact for the antenna (150)
11 and is connected to the end of the antenna (150). Contact (142) is the ground contact for the
12 radio card (140). Contact (151) is the signal contact and is connected to the antenna (150) a short
13 distance from the end of the antenna (150). Contact (141) is the signal contact for the radio card
14 (140).

15 Contact (151) and contact (141) are disposed on the cap (134) and the radio card (140),
16 respectively, such that the contacts engage each other when the cap (134) is inserted into or
17 engaged with the housing (132) of the computer device (130). Similarly, contact (152) and
18 contact (142) are disposed on the cap (134) and the radio card (140), respectively, such that the
19 contacts engage each other when the cap (134) is inserted into or engaged with the housing (132)
20 of the computer device (130). The contacts shown in the present embodiment are of the metal
21 button type wherein the connection is made when the two metal surfaces meet. Many variations
22 of the contacts are possible including the use of male/female connections and spring type
23 contacts.

24 A shield (148) is disposed around the bottom portion of the cap (134) and is used to
25 reduce the escape of electronic noise. Typically in computer devices of this type, the inside of
26 the housing of the computer device is shielded. Additionally, the area immediately surrounding
27 the radio device such as a radio card may also be shielded. By shielding the cap (134), the

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1 integrity of the housing and radio shields are not breached by the opening used to insert and
2 remove the radio card. The shield (148) is connected to the antenna ground contact (152) on the
3 cap (134). A hole (159) in the shield (148) allows the signal contacts (151 and 141) to engage
4 without being grounded.

5 Referring now to Fig. 21, the cap (134) is shown embedded within which are two
6 antennas (160 and 162) designed to receive and transmit different radio frequency signals. The
7 first antenna (160) and the second antenna (162) are both connected to a common ground contact
8 (167) which is connected to the shield and which engages the ground contact (177) on the radio
9 card (170). The first antenna (160) is connected to a first signal contact (165) and is disposed on
10 the cap (134) to engage a first signal contact (175) disposed on the radio card (170). Similarly,
11 the second antenna (162) is connected to a second signal contact (166) and is disposed on the cap
12 (134) to engage a second signal contact (176) disposed on the radio card (170). Thus the radio
13 card (170) will use a signal via contact (175) or via contact (176) depending upon which antenna
14 it would like to use. Which antenna it would like to use is dependent upon the desired frequency
15 upon which it want to transmit and receive.

16 The radio card (170) as shown has three contacts (175, 176 and 177). However, if the
17 radio transceiver in the radio card (170) is designed such that it would only be able to transmit
18 and receive signals which correspond to the first antenna (160), then it would not need to have
19 contact (176) and it could be left off. Similarly, if the radio card (170) were only going to use
20 second antenna (162) then contact (175) could be omitted. Thus, standardizing contact position
21 with respect to antenna type allows for flexibility in cap usage with various radio cards such that
22 only appropriate antennas will be connected to the radio card.

23 Referring to Fig. 22, two antennas (180 and 182) are embedded in the cap (134). In this
24 embodiment built in accordance with the present invention, the two antennas (180 and 182) not
25 only share a common ground contact (186) which engages the ground contact (196) of the radio
26 card (190), but they also share a common signal contact (185) which engages the signal contact
27 (195) on the radio card (190). Thus, both antennas receive and transmit signals using the same
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1 two contacts. This embodiment requires a radio card (190) which can filter the different signals
2 and thus use the signal from the desired antenna while ignoring the signals which arrive via the
3 other antenna.

4 Referring to Fig. 23, a computer device (111) built in accordance with the present
5 invention is shown which is designed to implement an antenna diversity scheme. A first antenna
6 (201) is embedded in the cap (120). A second antenna (202) is shown embedded in the band
7 (122). As discussed in the embodiment as shown in Fig. 21, the two antennas (201 and 202)
8 share a common ground contact (207). The first antenna (201) is connected to a signal contact
9 (205). Likewise, the second antenna (202) is connected to a signal contact (206). The hole (149)
10 in the shield (148) which prevent the signal contacts (205 and 206) from grounding is shown in
11 dashed lines.

12 The first antenna (201) is similar to the second antenna (202) and both are designed to
13 transmit and receive similar radio frequency signals. When the cap (120) is engaged in the
14 opening of the housing (112), the first antenna (201) and the second antenna (202) will be
15 perpendicular with respect to each other. The quality of the signal received by the first antenna
16 (201) and the quality of the signal received by the second antenna (202) may be greatly different
17 since the antennas are place at right angles with respect to each other. In the present
18 embodiment, the radio card can check the quality of each signal and use the antenna which is
19 currently receiving the stronger signal. Additionally, it can switch to the other antenna when the
20 conditions change such that the signal is no longer acceptable. Utilizing two similar antennas in
21 this matter, antenna diversification, can be very important in computer terminals of this type
22 since they are often mobile and are often subjected to a rapidly changing environment. An
23 antenna diversification scheme of this type can be used to help eliminate the reception problems
24 associated with signal multipath.

25 Referring now to Fig. 24, another embodiment of the present invention is shown with the
26 first antenna (211) and the second antenna (212) attached to the housing (112) of the computer
27 terminal (111). As in the embodiment shown in Fig. 23, the first antenna (211) is similar to the
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1 second antenna (212) and both are designed to transmit and receive similar radio frequency
2 signals and are perpendicular with respect to each other such that an antenna diversity scheme
3 can be implemented. The antennas (211 and 212) are connected to the contacts (205, 206 and
4 207) through the cap (120) and through the band (112).

5 Referring to Fig. 26, the embodiment of Fig. 24 is shown with the only differences being
6 that the first antenna (221) and the second antenna (222) are positioned slightly differently and
7 the antennas are designed to transmit and receive different radio frequency signals. Thus, the
8 radio card uses the signal on contact (205) when it wants to receive signals via the first antenna
9 (221) and uses the signal on contact (206) when it wants to receive signal via the second antenna
10 (222).

11 In Figs. 23, 24 and 26, the portion of the connection between the contacts (205, 206 and
12 207) and the antennas which pass through the band (112) are shown schematically as wires. In
13 the best mode of the present invention, the transmission of the signal through the band (112)
14 would be accomplished through the use of a micro shield strip (230) as shown in Fig. 25. The
15 micro shield strip consists of several conductive ribbons running the length of the band (112) and
16 separated by the non-conductive material of the band (112). A wide top ribbon (233) and a wide
17 bottom ribbon (234) are used to sandwich two smaller ribbons (236 and 237). The smaller
18 ribbons (236 and 237) are used to transmit the antenna signals and are connected to contacts (205
19 and 206) respectively. The wide bands (233 and 234) are common to each other and are used to
20 ground each of the antennas and are connected to the ground contact (207) on the cap (120). The
21 wide ground ribbons (233 and 234) shield the smaller antenna signal ribbons (236 and 237) and
22 help to maintain the signal integrity. The impedance of the micro-shield strip is determined by
23 relative spacing and dimensions of the strip as well as the dielectric constant of the material of
24 the band.

25 Referring now to Fig. 27, a radio card or modem card (252) is shown inserted into a
26 computer device (250). In addition to antenna contacts or telephone line contacts (255) on the
27 card (252) and corresponding antenna, modem or telephone contacts (256) disposed on the
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receiving portion of the computer device (250), there are a pair of power contacts (260) positioned on the housing of the card (252) which engage a corresponding pair of power contacts (262) disposed on the receiving portion of the computer device (250). The power contacts (262) are connected by wires to the power supply (265) for the computer device (250) and provides supplemental power to the radio, modem or cellular phone inside the card (252) which cannot be provided by the electrical interface.

Referring now to Fig. 28, the card (252) is shown with an additional pair of power contacts (270) positioned on the opposite side of the card (252) with respect to the first pair of power contacts (260). The additional pair of power contacts (270) engage a corresponding pair of power contacts (272). The power contacts (272) are also connected by wires to the power supply (265). The second pair of engaging contacts (270 & 272) provide power source redundancy and insures that the card (252) will be connected to the power supply (265) even if the card (252) shifts slightly from side to side in the receiving portion of the computer device (250). This redundancy of contacts positioned on opposite sides of the housing of a communication card could also be used to insure that the communication card is always in contact with an appropriate antenna or telephone.

Referring now to Fig. 31, an antenna selection or switching system built in accordance with the present invention is shown. In this embodiment, the switch system (320) utilizes three transmission lines (322, 324 and 326). Each of the three transmission lines (322, 324 and 326) are commonly connected at one end (328). The end of each of the three transmission lines (322, 324 and 326) which are commonly connected are referred to the common end. The end of each transmission line opposite of the common end is referred to as the load end. The dash line (330) symbolically represents the housing of the radio communications device which utilizes the switch system (320).

The first transmission line (322) is connected to a radio transceiver (322) at the load end. The second transmission line is connected to an internal antenna (334) at the load end. The third transmission line (326) is not connected to anything at the load end. The load end of the third

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1 transmission line is where an optional external antenna may be attached. The internal antenna
2 (334) will typically be a low-gain antenna and will typically have a rated resistance of 50 ohms.

3 Each of the transmission lines (322, 324 and 326) have transmission characteristic. The
4 characteristics significantly relevant to the present invention are the line impedance and the line
5 length. The line impedance is measured in ohms. The line length is measured in electrical
6 degrees at a given frequency.

7 Referring now to Fig. 32, a similar system (340) to the system (320) of Fig. 31 is shown
8 with the difference that the system (340) of Fig. 32 includes an external antenna (342) connected
9 to the load end of transmission line (326). The external antenna (342) is typically a high gain
10 antenna is also typically rated at an impedance of 50 ohms.

11 In utilizing the selection or switch system shown in Figs. 31 and 32, consideration must
12 be given to the radio frequency or frequency range which will be utilized by the radio transceiver
13 (332) for communication. Also the characteristics of the internal and external antennas are
14 considered.

15 The system also includes system characteristics which result from consideration of the
16 individual components of the systems. The important characteristics for the present invention
17 include the VSWR (voltage standing-wave ratio) looking into the load end of the first
18 transmission line (322) and the power distribution ratio between the second transmission line
19 (324) and the third transmission line (326). The goal of the system is to have as much power as
20 possible transmitted to the second transmission line (324), and thus to the internal antenna (334),
21 when there is no external antenna attached. Conversely, when there is an external antenna (342)
22 attached, the goal is to have as much power as possible transmitted to the third transmission line
23 (326), and thus transmitted to the external antenna (342).

24 By carefully selecting the transmission lines (322, 324 and 326) for specific impedance
25 and length characteristics, desired VSWR and power distribution ratios can be achieved. When
26 appropriate transmission lines (322, 324 and 326) are selected, the system automatically changes
27 from one desired configuration to another desired configuration when an external antenna is

connected. In other words, when there is no external antenna connected, the transmission power is primarily sent to the internal antenna. When the external antenna is connected, the system characteristics change such that the external antenna is now receiving a significant amount of power.

The amount of power which is transmitted to the external antenna (342) when connected need not greatly exceed the power transmitted to the internal antenna (334). In fact, the system could achieve significant improvement in performance even if the percentage of the power transmitted to the external antenna (342) is fifty percent or less. This improvement results from the practical consideration that the internal antenna (334) typically will have different gain characteristics on the frequency or range of frequency used for communication. Thus, if the external antenna (342) has a gain sufficiently greater than the internal antenna (334), the external antenna (342) will provide for better performance even if it only receives half of the transmitted power. For example, it is desirable that the system of the present invention behave in a manner similar to a 6dB unequal power splitter. That is to say that at least 75% of the power will be transmitted to the external antenna (342) while no more than 25% of the power is transmitted to the internal antenna (334). However, this 75/25 split may or may not be achievable depending upon other system considerations such as the particular frequency range used for communication and the characteristics of the antennas and radio transceiver.

In a specific implementation of this embodiment of the present invention, a system can be designed for use in a communications system that operates in the 830 to 870 MHz range. The system should have a voltage standing-wave ratio (VSWR) of better than 2:1 and approximately 50% of the power should be transmitted to the external antenna when attached. Thus, the system can have two conditions: one with the external antenna attached and one without the external antenna attached.

With the above identified system criteria in mind, the transmission lines are chosen such that under both conditions, with and without an external antenna, the VSWR is better than 2:1. Additionally, when the external antenna is connected, approximately half of the power should be

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transmitted through the third transmission line leading to the external antenna.

When selecting the specifications for the transmission lines, several design considerations should be accounted for. The line length of the third transmission line leading to the external antenna is probably best set at or near 90 degrees or 180 degrees. This presents the best condition for transmitting as much power as possible to the internal antenna when there is no external antenna connected. Additionally, the impedance level of the first transmission line which is connected to the radio transceiver will typically have to be less than the desired impedance due to the transformation which occurs in the system. Also, to the extent possible, the impedance levels of the second and third transmission lines should be approximately equal to the impedance of the antennas to be attached, typically 50 ohms.

In the specific implementation discussed above, with the external and internal antennas, as well as the radio transceiver, having and looking for an impedance of 50 ohms, the following transmission line characteristics accomplish an antenna selection system built in accordance with the present invention: first transmission line to the radio transceiver, 35 ohms with a line length of 125 degrees at 850 MHz; second transmission line to the internal antenna, 50 ohms with a line length of 45 degrees at 850 MHz; and third transmission line to the optional external antenna, 50 ohms with a line length of 90 degrees at 850 MHz. Utilizing these transmission line specifications, the system will always have a voltage standing-wave ratio (VSWR) of better than 2:1 when looking into the load end of the first transmission line. This is true throughout the entire frequency range of 830 to 870 MHz and whether or not an external antenna is connected to the load end of the third transmission line. Additionally, when the external antenna is connected, the power distribution to the external antenna will be approximately half. Thus in a typical implementation, if the internal antenna has a -2dBi gain while the external antenna has a +3dBi gain, the performance gain will be considerable when the external antenna is connected.

Obviously, many modifications and variations of the present invention are possible in light of the above teachings. It is therefore to be understood that, within the scope of the appended claims, the invention may be practiced otherwise than as specifically described.